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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Monday, June 2, 1941

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "WASHDAY TIPS." Information from Experiment Station officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Here's Monday--wash day in most American homes. And now that the warm weather has arrived, wash day is getting busier and busier. The more the family takes to wearing wash clothes, the more work you have on wash day.

The news today may help you lighten your laundry load. Here are tips from scientists at different State experiment stations who have been making special studies and tests of home laundering.

The first tip is about sunshine and silk. Many a housewife hangs her clothes to dry in the sun automatically--just as a matter of course. That's fine for white cottons and linens. Sunlight is a big help in keeping them white. But for silks and colored fabrics a shady place is safer. Sunshine can do serious damage to silk, as tests at the Ohio Station show. Ohio scientists report considerable truth in the old idea that "sun rots silk." (They prefer to say "weakens" instead of "rots," but it's all the same idea.)

Tests at the Ohio Station showed that as little as 15 minutes' exposure to sun cuts down the strength of a great variety of silk fabrics. And 48 hours of sun cuts down the strength of the silk anywhere from a half to three-quarters.

Sunlight also affected the color of the silks in the Ohio test. Twelve hours of sunlight faded all the silks somewhat, but it was hardest on blue and violet. All the colors turned slightly grey as a result of sunshine.

Tips you might take from these tests are: First, never hang any silk--and that includes silk stockings--to dry in the sun. Second, even supposedly "fast" colors may be safer drying in the shade. Three, better not choose silk for playsuits



or bathing suits that are going to get a lot of exposure to sunlight.

These same Ohio scientists made further tests to find out how laundering affects the strength and color of silk. The tests showed that the first laundering made pure-dye silks stronger, probably because they shrank a little. But after 15 launderings the silks began to lose strength. However, the tests showed that laundering is not nearly so hard on wash silk as sunlight.

As for the effect of laundering on color, the tests showed that yellow faded least, and blue and violet most. Pale pink entirely disappeared after a number of launderings. Violet faded to a red violet, and green to a yellow green showing the loss of blue. Peach color suffered less than pink.

From this you might take a tip that peach color may be better than pink for garments like silk underwear that must have a lot of washing; also that yellow might be a good choice for a silk dress you will wear and wash a great deal.

Now here are some laundry tips from the Virginia Station. Virginia scientists consider home laundering a definite job of household engineering. And here are some of the conclusions that have already come out in their study: They find that soaps that seem bargains may actually be most expensive. Virginia tests showed that the cheaper bulkier soaps give no saving in cost over the more concentrated and apparently more expensive soaps. Some rather soft bar soaps contain considerable water so you may be paying for water. The Washington Station some years ago reported that bar soaps may contain from 10 to 30 percent water while flakes, or chips, or powders are much drier--generally are less than 10 percent water.

The Virginia tests also showed that using soft water cuts down the soap you need by half. Your saving on soap is often enough to pay the interest on a mechanical water-softener.

Now here's a precaution against crowding the washing machine. Both the Virginia and Washington scientists agree that putting too many clothes in the washing



machine at once is a common cause of inefficiency. The Washington scientists report that underloading--putting in too few clothes--results in better cleaning and less electric expense than over-loading. Slightly smaller loads than the manufacturer's directions suggest are better than larger loads.

The last point from the Virginia Station is that the ideal temperature for washing clothes well is 160 degrees--that is, water just too hot to hold your hand in. But a temperature of 140 degrees--one that your hand can just stand--gives almost as good results. That's a tip for a home where hot water is not too plentiful or heating is expensive.

And that's all the wash day tips for today.



